

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330-5130

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: LEED

SUBJECT: Engineering Technical Letter (ETL) 89-7:
Design of Air Force Courtrooms

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Purpose. This ETL:

a. Is authorized in accordance with AFR 8-7, Air Force Engineering Technical Letters (ETL) dated 9 January 1986, and is to be implemented accordingly. Waivers will be processed in accordance with procedures established by the Model Installation Program.

b. Establishes guidelines for developing properly designed courtrooms which are essential to emphasize the Air Force commitment to the fair and unbiased application of military law.

2. Effective Date. This ETL is effective with those projects which have not reached the 2 percent design concept state as of the date of this letter.

3. Referenced Publications.

3.1. AFR 86-2, Standard Facility Requirements.

4. Approval Process. All plans for courtroom design shall be forwarded for comment and coordination to HQ USAF/JAJT at the 35 percent and 100 percent design stages.

5. Design Criteria. The major functional areas are the courtroom, judge's chambers, deliberation room, witness waiting room, counsel offices, and court reporter room.

5.1. Courtroom. A good design provides an arrangement of facilities so that the participants can efficiently do their work in comfort and dignity. Approximately 1200 to 1600 SF is required for this function. The following design parameters apply to new construction and remodeling existing facilities:

5.1.1. The line of sight of each participant is the most important design aspect of the courtroom. It is vital to an effective, properly functioning courtroom.

5.1.2. Each person MUST be able to clearly see and hear all other participants.

5.1.3. The courtroom layout should be arranged with no interior columns, posts or other obstructions to clear lines of sight.

5.1.4. Provide a built-in judge's bench elevated enough to establish a focal point for all courtroom activities. The size and height of the bench must allow the judge to clearly see the witness and the court members. This applies to horizontal as well as vertical lines of sight.

5.1.5. Provide a box for the witness.

5.1.6. Provide a box for the court members large enough to accommodate at least nine members including desk space for each member. This box should be arranged and located so members do not have to turn significantly to clearly see the witness, the judge or the counsel.

5.1.7. Provide space for 25 to 50 spectators.

5.1.8. Provide table space for counsel to accommodate two people (prosecutors) at one table and three people at the other (two defense counsel and the accused). Tables shall be the same size.

5.1.9. Provide a court reporter desk placed so that the judge, witness and counsel can be seen without having to turn away from the desk.

5.1.10. Provide lighting, heating/air conditioning, electric power and soundproofing (acoustics). The use of advanced audiovisual technology in courtroom design will require electrical power and cabling systems capable of supporting the following conditions:

5.1.10.1. Video technology used to present large exhibits or documents.

5.1.10.2. Presentation of video depositions and testimony.

5.1.10.3. Increased outside communication due to the "sensational" nature of a trial. This could include such items as significant press coverage or accommodations for a hostile defendant(s) which might require a closed circuit television system so the proceedings in the courtroom can be viewed on monitors in near-by rooms.

5.1.10.4. Video and/or audio tape recording of proceedings.

5.1.10.5. Voice amplification as needed.

5.1.10.6. Computer technology for court reporting, electronic research and demonstrative evidence.

5.1.10.7. The use of advanced audio-visual technology will require that all aspects of the design accommodate special requirements and needs. (i.e., Provide clear camera angles and acoustics designed to enhance video and tape presentations. Recognize problems associated with presenting videotaped information clearly and concisely to the entire assemblage. Cabling should not be visible.)

5.1.11. As a minimum, install an automatic fire alarm and evacuation system when a separate building is provided. When this facility is included in an existing structure, the fire protection system of the building shall be extended to include the courtroom. An evacuation alarm shall be provided in the courtroom and a manual pullbox(s) at exits directly to the outside.

5.1.12. Proper flag etiquette should be incorporated into the courtroom design so the flags do not appear to be an afterthought. Typically each court room has a departmental as well as a US flag. These flags must flank the judge and be located behind the judge's bench.

5.1.13. Follow Table of Allowances TA 006, Part C, Section D for information on courtroom furniture, administrative supplies, and necessary office furniture, rugs, drapes, for military judges.

5.1.14. Consider incorporating features which permit screening of spectators visually and/or with metal detectors. This may include the use of magnetometers and x-ray machines. Doorways and adjacent space must be capable of accommodating these devices and providing a clean flow of courtroom participants in the sanitized area if the need arises. See paragraph 7 and attachment 3 for additional guidance.

5.2 Judge's chambers. The military judge should be assigned a private area of approximately 120 SF located near the courtroom with convenient access to the bench.

5.2.1. Provide a quiet area for work and to discuss matters with counsel.

5.2.2. Provide a telephone with AUTOVON access.

5.2.3. Provide either free-standing bookshelves or bookcase which are of a size to contain:

5.2.3.1. Current Manual for Court-Martial (MCM).

5.2.3.2. Instruction guide (DA Pamphlet 27-9).

5.2.3.3. Military Justice Reporters (Reference Material).

5.3. Court Member Deliberation Room. This room should be large enough to comfortably accommodate at least nine court members (min. 220 SF).

5.3.1. Provide a conference table and chairs.

5.3.2. Soundproof the room to prevent members' discussions from being overheard and to prevent the members from hearing what occurs outside the room.

5.4. Witness Waiting Room(s). The room should be approximately 140 square feet each.

5.4.1. During the design process, only one witness waiting room may be designated. Provide a multipurpose office that can serve in those cases where two witness waiting rooms are required.

5.4.2. In planning for these rooms, consider the comfort of these witnesses.

5.5. Counsel Offices. Circuit counsel participate in a large number of cases. Each office should be approximately 140 square feet.

5.5.1. Provide an office, reasonably convenient to the courtroom, for each the prosecution and defense.

5.5.2. This office may also can be used to interview witnesses.

5.6. Court reporter. Provide 120 square feet office.

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Space Requirement Table	
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	Square Feet
Courtroom	1200 to 1600
Judge's Chambers	120
Court Member Deliberation Room	220
Witness Waiting Room	140 ea
Counsel Offices	140 ea
Court Reporter	120
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6. Functional Relationships.

6.1. General: The functional relationship of courtroom activity is often neglected. The pattern of use is important to every court case but it can become critical in cases involving extensive press interest, cases where the security of the parties is a concern, or cases where the government wishes to keep a child witness or other victim clearly separated from the accused or defense witnesses. There are several functional relationships which must be considered in designing an effective courtroom.

6.2. Judge/court member relationship.

6.2.1. Provide access for the military judge and the court members in and out of the courtroom so they have no contact with the witnesses and spectators.

6.2.1.2. Provide a separate exit from the judge's chamber and court member deliberation room in addition to an entrance into the courtroom.

6.2.1.2. Provide easy access to the street which will isolate the judge and court members from spectators and witnesses.

6.2.1.3. Provide separate access for the court members to the deliberation room from outside the courtroom without disturbing the judge and counsel who may be holding a hearing out of the presence of the court members to discuss matters of law.

6.3. Witness/counsel/accused relationship.

6.3.1. Witness rooms should be located near the courtroom. If possible, a separate door to the courtroom near the witness box should be provided so the witnesses can enter and leave the courtroom without mingling with the spectators.

6.3.2. The entrance for the witnesses may also be used by the accused and counsel. They may also have their rooms in this area and enter through this door, thereby also separating them from the court members and the spectators.

6.4. Spectator/Courtroom relationship.

6.4.1. Spectators and media persons should be able to enter and leave the courtroom and the building easily without contact with the court participants.

6.4.2. Spectators must also have access to toilet facilities. See requirements in paragraph 8.2.

6.5. Segregated circulation patterns: To develop a design which meets the needs of all the parties, it is helpful to think of the courtroom complex as having of three functional areas:

6.5.1. A public area for the spectators.

6.5.2. Semi-private areas for witnesses, the accused and counsel.

6.5.3. Private areas for the judge and court members.

Segregated circulation patterns should limit contact between the different groups so that conflicts are minimized and the judge

and court members have a degree of separation. Doors, railings, desks or other barriers can be used to control access to the various areas.

7. Security considerations. Deterring violence within the court is a primary design objective. There are two aspects of courtroom security:

7.1. Building design which dictates proper circulation with clear identification of private, semi-private, and public areas.

7.2. Risk control by locking doors; using barriers to control and screen spectators; and facilitating for proper care in handling exhibits such as weapons or drugs. Consider items such as an alarm to quickly summon security police.

7.3. Consider surveillance and alarms systems that are invisible to the general public.

7.4. The flow of people shall be by way of a central control point so they can be screened quickly and easily. Counsel, judge and court members, once screened, should be able to move about the restricted courtroom area (e.g, judges chambers, deliberation room, counsel offices) without having to be screened again every time they leave the courtroom proper.

8. Toilets.

8.1. Provide a single toilet, for both male and female use, for court members and judges not accessible to others, sized 60 to 80 square feet.

8.2. Provide two toilets, one each for male and female use, for all others, e.g. witnesses, accused and counsel, spectators, sized 60 to 100 square feet.

9. Materials. Courtroom finish materials should impart a dignified, professional appearance but concurrently must be durable, economical and low-maintenance. Consider finishes that are graffiti-proof.

10. The action officer for this ETL is Ms. Georgia A. Simpson, AF/LEEDF, AV 297-6246 or (202) 767-6246.

FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

JOHN A. GILLIS, Col, USAF
Dep Ch, Installation Development Div. Diagram
Directorate of Engineering and
Services

- 3 Atch
- 1. Distribution
- 2. Floor plan
- 3. Functional Relationship

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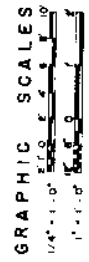
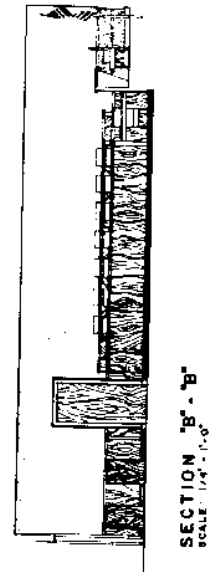
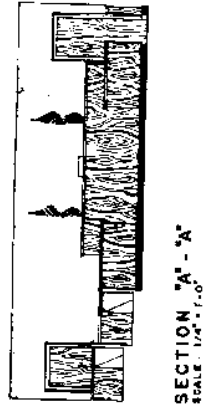
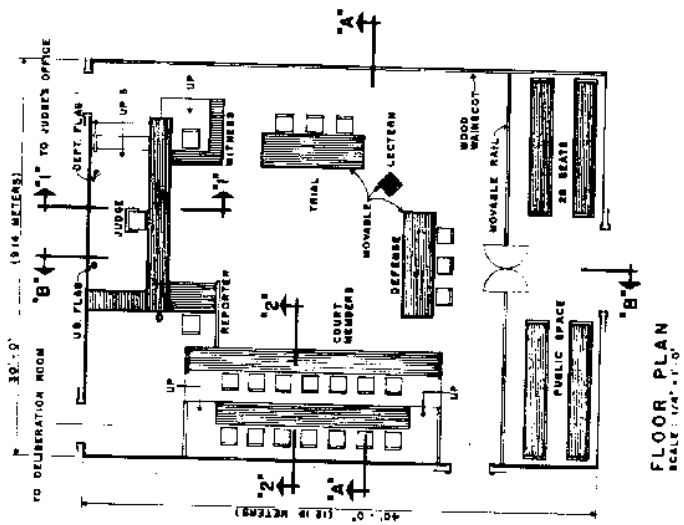
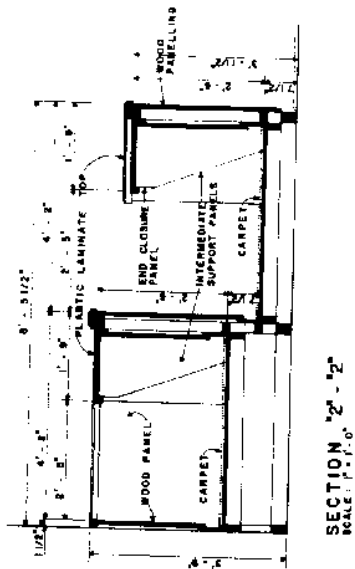
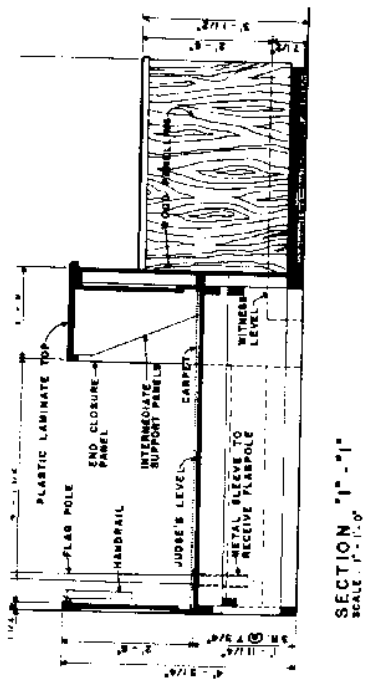
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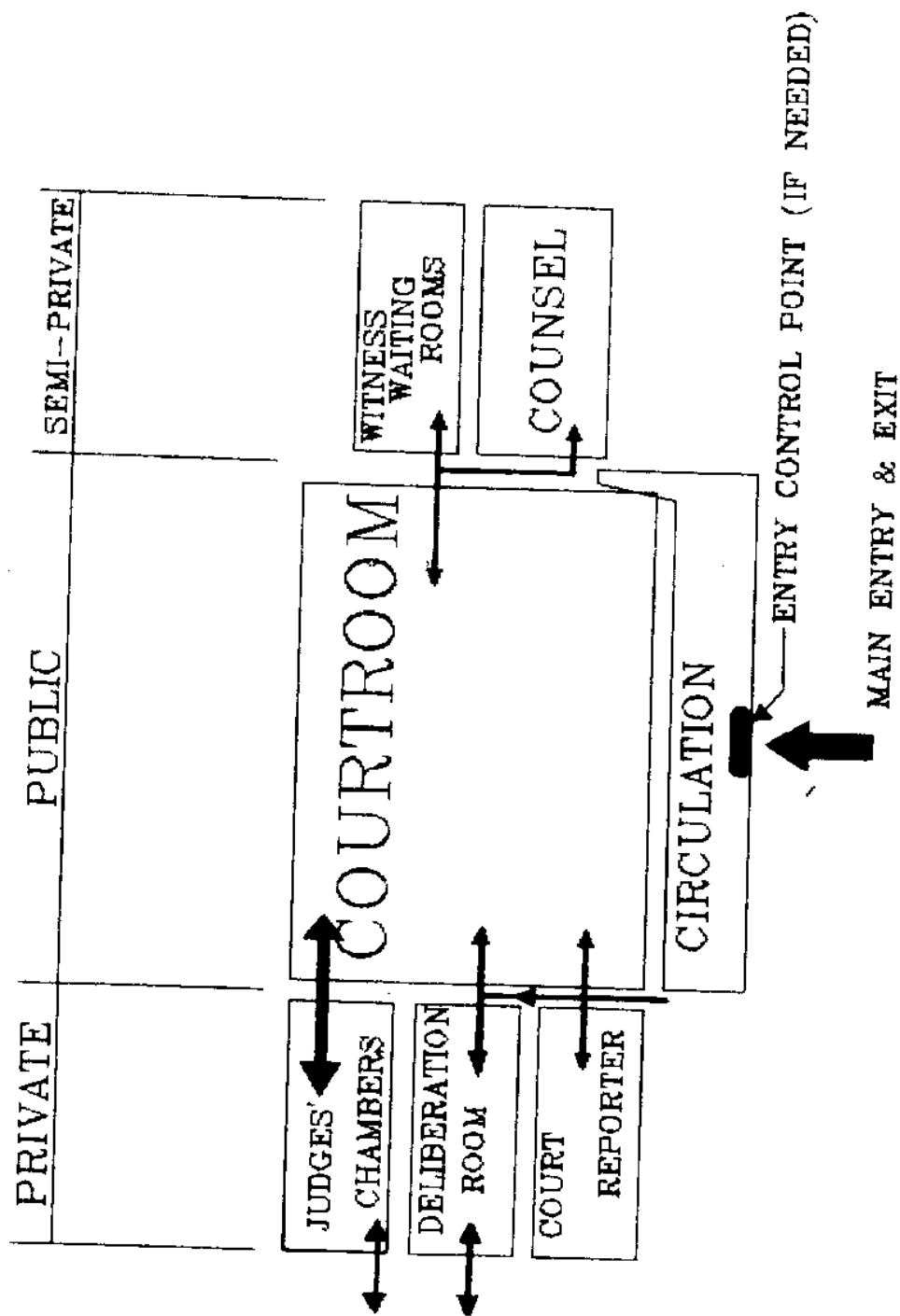
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FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP DIAGRAM